

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the synthesis of gabapentin comprising the preparation of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid monoamide, the Hofmann transposition of the same monoamide, the purification of a gabapentin salt and the crystallization from organic solvent, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the preparation of the acid monoamide comprises:

- a) the amination of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride by reaction with aqueous NH_3 at a temperature lower than 30°C by using a NH_3 /anhydride molar ratio lower than 3;
- b) the product precipitation through the acidification of the reaction mixture.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 1 wherein the amination of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride takes place by reaction with NH_3 ~~generally utilized~~ in aqueous solution with a concentration comprised between 25 and 35% by weight.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 2 wherein the amination of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride takes place by reaction with ~~ammonia~~ NH_3 in aqueous solution with a concentration around 28% by weight.

Claim 4 (Original): A process according to claim 1 wherein the acidification step is carried out with concentrated or gaseous hydrochloric acid.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 4 wherein the acidification step is carried out with aqueous hydrochloric acid with a concentration around 31% by weight.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 1 wherein the molar ratio between ~~ammonia~~ NH₃ and 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride is ~~comprised~~ between 2.2 and 2.9.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 6 wherein the molar ratio between ~~ammonia~~ NH₃ and 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride is ~~comprised~~ between 2.5 and 2.7.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 1 wherein the amination of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride is carried out at a temperature ~~comprised~~ between 10 and 25°C.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A precipitation process of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid monoamide comprising the acidification of an ammoniacal solution of the monoamide at a temperature ~~comprised~~ between 40 and 45°C until obtaining a pH around the values of 6.3-6.5, the continuation of the acidification step of the reaction mixture at the same temperature until obtaining a pH around the values of 3.8-4.2 and, at last, the precipitate filtration by keeping the temperature between 40 and 45°C.

Claim 10 (Original): A process according to claim 9 wherein the acidification step is carried out with concentrated or gaseous hydrochloric acid.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 10 wherein the acidification step is carried out with aqueous hydrochloric acid with a concentration around 31% by weight.

Claim 12 (Original): A process according to claim 1 further comprising the transformation of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid into the corresponding anhydride.

Claim 13 (Original): A process according to claim 12 wherein the transformation of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid into the corresponding anhydride is carried out by reaction with acetic anhydride in the presence of an organic solvent.

Claim 14 (Original): A process according to claim 13 wherein the organic solvent is toluene.

Claim 15 (Original): A process for the preparation of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid monoamide comprising:

- a) the amination of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride by reaction with aqueous NH_3 at a temperature lower than 30°C by using a NH_3 /anhydride molar ratio lower than 3;
- b) the product precipitation through the acidification of the reaction mixture.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 15 wherein the amination of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride takes place by reaction with NH_3 ~~generally utilized~~ in aqueous solution with a concentration ~~comprised~~ between 25 and 35% by weight.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 16 wherein the amination of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride takes place by reaction with ~~ammonia~~ NH₃ in aqueous solution with a concentration around 28% by weight.

Claim 18 (Original): A process according to claim 15 wherein the acidification step is carried out with concentrated or gaseous hydrochloric acid.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 18 wherein the acidification step is carried out with aqueous hydrochloric acid with a concentration around 31% by weight.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 15 wherein the molar ratio between ~~ammonia~~ NH₃ and 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride is ~~comprised~~ between 2.2 and 2.9.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 20 wherein the molar ~~ration~~ ratio between ~~ammonia~~ NH₃ and 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride is ~~comprised~~ between 2.5 and 2.7.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 15 wherein the amination of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid anhydride is carried out at a temperature ~~comprised~~ between 10 and 25°C.

Claim 23 (Original): A process according to claim 15 further comprising the transformation of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid into the corresponding anhydride.

Claim 24 (Original): A process according to claim 23 wherein the transformation of 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid into the corresponding anhydride is carried out by reaction with acetic anhydride in the presence of an organic solvent.

Claim 25 (Original): A process according to claim 24 wherein the organic solvent is toluene.

Claim 26 (New): A process according to claim 1, wherein the 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid monoamide is not crystallized.

Claim 27 (New): A process according to claim 15, wherein the 1,1-cyclohexanediactic acid monoamide is not crystallized.